

## WEB CHAT ON CLIMATE CHANGE WITH EMBASSY ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER

**MARCH 21, 2012**

**Web Chat Moderator:** Many thanks for joining us today for a discussion on Climate Change in Nepal. Members of our Embassy's Environment and Development teams are ready to answer your questions! Please go ahead and submit your questions now for this live chat!

**Sharma Bala Ram:** I want to go to America for studying climate, America is also my dream country for visit, please if possible to provide visa in 6 months for visit without any documents, i will come MBC to submit passport, if the god heard my praying to provide visa.

**Web Chat Moderator:** Sharma, we're only discussing issues directly related to climate change in this web chat. and cannot answer visa questions here. We are happy to hear about your aspirations to study climate, and encourage you to refer to our website for visa information, at: <http://nepal.usembassy.gov/visas/non-immigrant-visas/which-visa-is-right-for-my-visit.html>

**guest:** At first I would like to thank Embassy for hosting this program. I would like to know the effects of Climate change on the Wetlands of Nepal. Are there any significant studies done relating to climate change and wetlands status in Nepal. Thank you. Wokil Bam

**Embassy Environment Officer:** Although we do not know of any specific on-going study related to climate change and wetlands in Nepal, we believe they would be among the most susceptible landscapes to climate change. Some of the major physical effects of climate change are a rise in temperature, possible changes in monsoon weather patterns, increase in frequency of extreme weather events, such as intense rainfall over a short span of time or extended period of drought. All of these changes in physical processes could have a direct bearing on vulnerable wetland areas.

**Embassy Environment Officer:** you're welcome.

**guest:** Are there any long term studies done relating to climate change in Nepal.  
Wokil Bam

**Embassy Environment Officer:** Since I arrived here, we've been looking for opportunities to add to our understanding of the impact of climate change in Nepal. One area we are currently focusing on, with the help of our partner, ICIMOD (International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development) is the impact on the glaciers in the high Himalayas.

**Embassy Environment Officer:** In addition to U.S. activities in this area, I believe that a number of other embassies, international organizations, and non-governmental agencies are also involved.

**Embassy Development Officer:** The Government of Nepal conducted a climate change vulnerability mapping for Nepal during the national adaptation plan of action preparation process. It broadly summarizes the likely impacts of climate change in Nepal.

**guest:** Last year I read an article about the danger of outburst of glacial lake in Nepal due to melting of ice. Do we have any current information on that? Wokil Bam

**Embassy Environment Officer:** Regarding Glacial Lake Outburst Floods, or "GLOFs" -- ICIMOD has done extensive studies. Check out their website: [www.ICIMOD.org](http://www.ICIMOD.org)

**Sanjeev Poudel:** I suppose that these organizations do not run long term project and they do concert to prepare reports

**Embassy Environment Officer:** This is, indeed, a challenge that we all face. Regarding scientific research, it's best to be able to conduct studies over a long period of time, and, if possible, to repeat them. We actively are looking for ways to partner with others to support longer term studies.

**guest:** I lived in Kathmandu for 3 years and people from ktm complained about getting the winter warmer whereas I am originally from Farwest Nepal and people complain about getting winter cooler. So are we just focusing on study of glacial or including the plain land too.

**Embassy Environment Officer:** The Glacier Mass Balance Monitoring study is focused on measuring the change in the glaciers of the Himalayas over time -- which we hope will give us a better understanding of the impact of global climate change on this particular ecosystem. Many believe that climate change will first, and most dramatically, make its effects known on such environments and glaciers and the Arctic.

**guest:** Thank you I will definitely check the ICIMOD website. Wokil Bam

**Web Chat Moderator:** You're welcome. We're happy to have your participation in this web chat!

**Bikash009:** I think climate change in Kathmandu, Nepal caused due to the use of waste dumping in Bagmati and Bishnumati river side. I am looking for any organization surveying in this context?

**Embassy Environment Officer:** We know that Nepal's National Trust for Nature Conservation has done a study of the impact of waste dumping on the Bagmati (and has produced a long-term plan for cleaning up the river). We suggest you get in touch with them at: [www.ntnc.org.np](http://www.ntnc.org.np)

**guest:** I am Nepali but I am sorry to ask, if there are any regulations implemented by the government in order to minimize the impacts of climate change in Nepal. Wokil Bam

**Embassy Environment Officer:** As a participant in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Nepal has drafted a National Adaptation Plan of Action for addressing Climate Change impacts, but I do not know of specific regulations that have been drafted or implemented.

**Bikash009:** Thank You!

**Web Chat Moderator:** You're welcome!

**Web Chat Moderator:** The following article published in Rising Nepal highlights the importance of a study on the effects of climate change for Nepal's wetlands and makes recommendation for a national action plan:

[http://www.gorkhapatra.org.np/detail.php?article\\_id=30266&cat\\_id=7](http://www.gorkhapatra.org.np/detail.php?article_id=30266&cat_id=7)

**guest:** Are there any other organization that are currently working on impacts of Climate change on water bodies (Glaical Lakes, wetlands and rivers) Wokil Bam

**Embassy Environment Officer:** World Wildlife Fund Nepal (WWF-Nepal), International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), National Water Conservation Foundation (NWCF), and Institution for Social and Environmental Transition (ISET) to name a few.

**guest:** Thank you. Actually I woke up early just to participate in this program. Wokil Bam

**Web Chat Moderator:** Wonderful! Thank you! We'd also encourage you to check out the Department of State's two pages that are focused on environmental issues. The first is the U.S. Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science at

<http://www.facebook.com/StateDepartment.OES> and the second is Global Conversations: Climate at <http://www.facebook.com/ConversationsClimate>

**guest:** One of the article has printed "Studies done by Department of Hydrology and Meteorology show that average temperature in Nepal is increasing at a rate of approximately 0.06 degrees Celsius per year". How does this related to Climate Change with rest of the world. Wokil Bam

**Embassy Environment Officer:** Changes appear to be taking place at different rates around the globe. Some locations are actually colder -- hence our reference these days to "climate change" in lieu of "global warming."

**guest:** Thank you for providing the names of Organizations. I will look in their website and follow them. Wokil Bam

**Web Chat Moderator:** You're most welcome and we hope the information is useful.

**Bikash009:** Is the climate change in Nepal due to mass landslide, erosion, un regularity in building roads in mountain region and cultivating rain forest other than global warming?

**Embassy Environment Officer:** We believe that climate change can exacerbate all of these things (landslide, erosion, flooding), but building roads and cutting down the vegetation could increase the chance of erosion and landslide, especially when coupled with more severe weather.

**Embassy Environment Officer:** We're not sure of the specific case of recent GLOFs, though we heard about the one in Humla last year. We believe ICIMOD would have a list of GLOFs and more information on individual events.

**Web Chat Moderator:** Our environmental team is working on answering all your questions. We appreciate your patience as they work on getting as many answered as possible during today's chat.

**guest:** What about the winters getting foggier ?

**Embassy Environment Officer:** We haven't heard anything specific regarding an increased amount of fog in Nepal in the winter. Are you thinking of a specific region?

**guest:** Mostly in Western Terai. During winter my family and friend would tell me its more foggy for a prolonged time than it used to be. Wokil Bam

**Embassy Environment Officer:** That's very interesting. We will keep on the lookout for information that may address or explain this phenomenon.

**guest:** Thank you. Wokil Bam

**Bikash009:** So the only cause is global warming for Glacier outburst and melting of Antarctic snow? What is the main root for controlling? : )

**Embassy Environment Officer:** GLOFs and increasing melt-rate in Antarctica and the Arctic are symptoms, not causes. The vast majority of scientists believe the culprit is an increasing amount of man-made emissions in the atmosphere which hold in the heat.

**guest:** I can definitely feel the climate change in Minnesota, as we have snow rarely in winter. Wokil Bam

**Embassy Environment Officer:** That's very interesting. Hard to imagine a winter in Minnesota without snow!

**guest:** ya, We have a week with high temp of 82 F so its kind of interesting.

**guest:** Is smoke and dust present in atm in KTM affecting the temp of KTM Valley? Any studies done relating with dust particle density present in air and average temp?

**Embassy Environment Officer:** This is a very interesting question. We have not heard of any study that is currently on-going that is seeking to determine whether there is such a connection.

**Embassy Environment Officer:** Atmospheric Brown Cloud is a human health concern, and is a possible concern for its impact on the glaciers of the Himalayas, but we haven't heard anything about it possibly affecting the temperature in the Kathmandu Valley.

**Web Chat Moderator:** We only have 5 minutes left for today's web chat. We can take a few more questions!

**Bikash009:** I have heard that some scientists claim that the cycle of season like 20 years of warm and 20 years of cold season, Is that true?

**Embassy Environment Officer:** There is a belief that climate variations can be cyclical, but studies I have seen indicate anthropogenic impact on the climate beyond naturally occurring cycles.

**guest:** Thank you for answering my questions. It was great to be a part of this discussion. Would love to have more of these programs. Wokil Bam

**Web Chat Moderator:** You're welcome, Wokil. Thanks again for joining us. We enjoy offering these kinds of forums for discussion. Stay tuned on our Embassy's Facebook page for similar programs in the future.

**Bikash009:** Thanks a lot!!

**Web Chat Moderator:** Thanks for joining us today, Bikash!

**guest:** It might be little bit out of topic question but I wondering if I want to do any research relating to climate change, are there any organization that support such researchers?

**Embassy Environment Officer:** You may want to contact the Kathmandu University - Dr. R. Kayastha who is currently coordinating research on the impact of climate change on the glaciers. Similarly, you may also want to contact Pradeep Mool at ICIMOD.

**guest:** thank you I will try to contact them. Wokil Bam

**Web Chat Moderator:** This concludes today's web chat. Thanks to everyone for joining us. The transcript of this web chat will be available on our Embassy website in a few days at:

<http://nepal.usembassy.gov/webchat.html>